'Stormbird of the Working Class' **Saul Maloff**

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THE NEW ROMAN CHURCH: A MODEST PROPOSAL

HAS BRITAIN A CHANCE?

BRIAN WICKER

STRIPPING FOR PROFIT

JAMES BRANSCOME

CRITICS' BOOK CHOICES

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NEWS & VIEWS

Bishops and Poverty

The American bishops' Campaign for Human Development has moved into its second year with multiple plus marks to its credit.

From the $8.5 million realized through last year's collection, 188 self-help grants have been awarded nationally, totaling over $4 million. Additional projects —funded locally from the 25 percent of the collection retained by the individual diocese—bring the amount dispersed to about $5.6 million overall.

The Campaign's table of grants is long and impressive.

But now some hard questions are beginning to be raised, particularly that the program might be scattershot, and focused too much on the results or manifestations of poverty rather than root causes and genuine structural change.

One of those who feels that something is wrong with the Campaign for Human Development is James J. Lamb, executive director of the Center for the Study of Development and Social Change in Cambridge. Lamb is a "frustrated petitioner" for a grant, but not on that account to be disqualified as commentator and critic.

Lamb's reservations are linked to two widely publicized intentions of the Campaign: to deal with the root causes of poverty, and to educate Americans, or Catholics at least, as to why poverty and powerlessness exist.

"One can legitimately help the individual needy to make their homes more livable, assist unskilled men to acquire truck driver experience, aid resident foreign nurses, erect a building for social services, et cetera," says Lamb. "But one cannot thus purport to be attacking the root causes of poverty."

By the same token, he holds that any meaningful education on the problem of poverty "must begin at the level of *our* consciousness." Education is not good works nor a repetition of common assumptions, says Lamb; one has to probe such questions as why poverty and injustice exist in affluent America, who is responsible, how unjust structures function, how power is exercised, what is the prevailing ethic, what are the national goals, and what *is* the situation according to a Christian judgment.

Lamb would spurn the present broad, multiple-grants approach for "several substantial projects" that dealt in some depth with structural obstacles. Besides going towards roots, "this could provide genuine content for *re-educating* Americans (including ourselves)," he maintains, "while serving as 'demonstration projects' to promote more fundamental initiatives and widespread efforts on the part of many."

Other critics of the Campaign for Human Development zero in on procedural issues (such as unnecessary and inappropriate investigation into the purposes of applying organizations), and the recent decision of the Administrative Board of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, which seemingly leaves dioceses unbound by the national criteria in using its quarter-share of the Campaign collection. Upwards of $2 million is involved here, and, as one observer expresses it, "a bishop is theoretically free to use the money to redecorate the chancery."

These are all legitimate concerns. But far more substantive are the points raised by Lamb. Unless they are grappled with, the bishops could fund programs from now to the Second Coming and change virtually nothing.

The Slates for '72

Crystal-balling the Presidential slates for '72, columnist Garry Wills sees the Republicans teaming Nixon and Reagan; the Democrats, Humphrey-Lindsay.

"Reagan would placate the right," says Wills, "while allowing Mr. Nixon to drop Agnew, who is out of sympathy with the President's foreign policy initiatives."

Humphrey will reincarnate "as the progressive populist of old, with a strong farm and Midwest appeal, needing a compensatory emphasis on youth and urban affairs." Enter Lindsay, "the very newest Democrat around, one still fresh and dripping from the political baptism font."

Possible hitch in the scenario: Ted Kennedy. He may sense, says Wills, that if he waits till '76, "it may not be enough, then, simply to be a Kennedy."

"Besides," Wills concludes, "the Democrats might decide in Miami that they want to beat Richard Nixon; and Kennedy is the only one who has the remotest chance of doing that."

'Digest' Indigestion

One of the points at issue in the wild *Reader's Digest* articles accusing the World Council of Churches, among other things, of "using church power and church funds to back insurrection in the U.S. and Africa" is a quote attributed to *Risk*, a WCC magazine.

The quote in question appeared in *Digest* criticism of a WCC call for churches to aid U.S. draft-resisters in Canada, a call made on the appeal of the Canadian Council of Churches.

In saying that *Risk* came "perilously close to inciting treason," *Digest* roving editor Clarence Hall, author of the articles, complained that *Risk* had branded "a criminal" any commanding officer who gave orders offensive to an objector. The indictment: "The courage of those who openly and fearlessly resist men who issue such commands merits supreme commendation."

The source of that statement is the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World of Vatican Council II; the context concerns commanders who give orders "for the methodical extermination of an entire people, nation, or ethnic minority."

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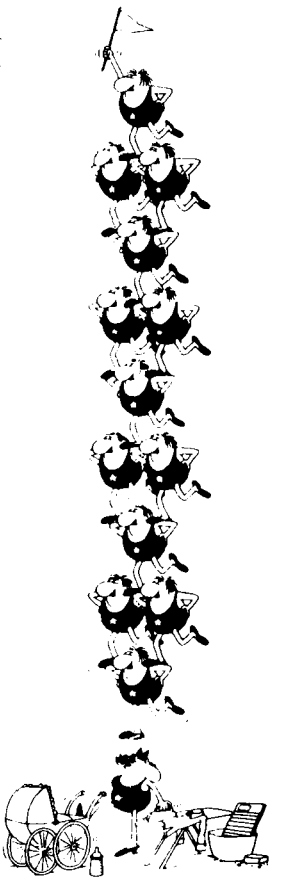

Odds and Ends

—The American Jewish Congress' annual analysis of the voting records of Supreme Court justices in civil rights and civil liberties cases gives highest marks to Justice Douglas (92.1 percent), as it has since the AJC published its first analysis 14 years ago. Rated lowest for the 1970-71 term: Burger and Blackmun, each with 37.8 percent.

—Apropos nothing at all: the cable address of the Archdiocese of New York is CURIA NEW YORK; the cable address of Clergy and Laymen Concerned's publication *American Report* is CALCRAP.

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Magic: Old or New?

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: It was refreshing to find a genuinely lucid account of contemporary occultism ["The New Magic," Sept. 17], especially regarding its newly-won appeal to the young, in the midst of a growing flood of journalistic misapprehension (cf. recent articles in *Look* [RIP] and *Newsweek*). Unfortunately, Mr. McFerran's article suffers somewhat from a too-synthetic bias. A linear perspective may well deprive us of a full appreciation of the multi-dimensional richness of modern magic, but a certain sensitivity to history can also prevent a misunderstanding of elements of our "occult revolution." A closer look at Malinowski's work, for instance, would reveal that far from identifying magic and religion in primitive culture, he insisted on their discrete origin and function, reacting against the view that magic lay behind religious beliefs or practices (cf. *Magic, Science and Religion*).

Further, we are never enlightened concerning the precise (or general) difference between the "new" magic and the "old." In fact, today's witchcraft is as radically different from the medieval craft as that was from its pagan precedents. The "folk" magic of "wise women" and "cunning men" bore scant resemblance, moreover, to the classical, academic tradition of Hermetic magism, astrology and alchemy, as these were combined, for example, in the work of Agrippa and Paracelsus. Contemporary witches, who conscientiously repudiate any connection with diabolism, are also likely to deny that one of their number who employs The Craft destructively is a witch at all. A black magician perhaps, but not a witch, most of whom espouse the maxim "An' ye shall do no harm, come what may." A glance at the Anglo-Saxon Dictionary should belie the suggestion that *warlock* (-"word-breaker") was anything but a term of contempt

(Continued on page 239)

NEWS & VIEWS: 218 **CORRESPONDENCE: 219**
EDITORIAL: 219
HAS BRITAIN GOT A CHANCE? *Brian Wicker* **220**
THE NEW ROMAN CHURCH: A MODEST PROPOSAL: *James R. Kelly* **222**
STORMBIRD OF THE WORKING CLASS: *Saul Maloff* **226**
STRIPPING FOR PLEASURE AND PROFIT: *James Branscome* **229**
CRITICS' CHOICES FOR CHRISTMAS: *Saul Maloff, Martin E. Marty, Alice Mayhew, Wilson Carey McWilliams, William Pfaff, Raymond A. Schroth, Peter Steinfels, Elliott Wright*

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STILL ANOTHER WAR

The war in Vietnam continues, the war in the Middle East threatens to break out again, and in South Asia a new war may begin. Or perhaps it has already begun. Clashes between Indian and West Pakistanian troops are taking place regularly along the border where Bengali guerrillas are crossing from Indian sanctuaries to strike in their homeland. India is shelling across the frontier every day. Both countries are putting themselves on a wartime basis. The chances that full-scale hostilities can be avoided are still good; but chances that anything resembling a stable peace can be arranged are less promising. Another world powderkeg may be in the making. And one way or the other, it seems almost inevitable that a lot of blood will be cruelly spilt.

India's designs are clear. The 9.5 million refugees from East Bengal are an intolerable burden on the Indian economy. Last spring the pleasant dream of an amiable Pakistan led by the newly elected Bengal majority was shattered. New Delhi desires to salvage at least a friendly regime—autonomous or independent—in the East, especially when the alternative is to turn a blind eye to the West Pakistan military's terror, and a deaf ear to the guerrillas' appeal for help. The reverse side of this coin is India's interest in influencing the character of any independent state which may emerge on its borders. It is a controverted point whether India need be worried about East Bengali nationalism infecting its own turbulent state of West Bengal, but surely New Delhi would just as soon have a certain control over the guerrilla movement from the start. The Indians are thus supplying and training the guerrillas. The Indian army means to tie down the West Pakistani forces along the border while the guerrillas—the Mukti Bahini—liberate the interior. And the guerrillas appear to be succeeding. They are reported as controlling one-fifth of East Bengal and effectively operating almost everywhere.

West Pakistan, on the other hand, continues to believe that a minority outside force can force the Bengalis into a resigned submission. Gruesome reprisals against villages thought to be harboring guerrillas seem to be the order of the day. There is not much the West Pakistanis can do against India except call for international supervision of the border—a call Mrs. Gandhi, for obvious reasons, has rejected. For a long time Pakistan con-

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sidered itself an equal power with India and the realization that it is only a power one-fourth the size, which, with the loss of the East, would become one-tenth the size, is surely one element which keeps the West Pakistanis holding on desperately to the Bengal tiger. Still, the reality of the Indian preponderance of power is apparently being felt in Rawalpindi. About all West Pakistan could hope for from a war would be a quick grab of territory in the West and a favorable outcome from either an early ceasefire or the intervention of other nations. And what about the other nations? Revolutionary China sticks by the West Pakistan military rule in Bengal, supplying arms and assurances against India, but neither in overwhelming amounts. The Soviet Union is similarly backing India with pledges and arms but also cautious advice. President Nixon's decision to cut off the remaining military aid destined for Pakistan put this country, in some ways, in the position of least committed nation. Nixon's move was probably less motivated by diplomatic considerations than by the necessities of maneuvering foreign aid through the Senate. Nonetheless, it was a welcome step. The international complications of the situation are still at a minimum, and they should be kept that way. The U.S. should concentrate its energies on a massive humanitarian effort for the refugees.

Even humanitarian efforts, however, cannot substitute for a political settlement. The Mukti Bahini, in fact, maintain that the humanitarian effort in East Bengal has been diverted to serve the ends of the West Pakistani forces. Accordingly, the guerrillas have struck against relief supply ships, and UN spokesmen have warned that continuation of the relief program may soon become impossible. What, then, are possible political outcomes? One, of course, is that Rawalpindi would relent, release the Bengal leader Sheikh Mujib, and grant the autonomous status which was refused before. But too much blood has gone over the dam, both for the Bengalis to accept this solution, and for the West Pakistani leadership to be able to offer it and still hold onto their jobs if not their heads. Much more probable is that there will be no end to the struggle until independence for the East is virtually assured. However, any scrap of camouflage placed over this outcome, in the way of a temporary confederation between East and West, might make West Pakistan's leaders swallow more easily what is, after all, the demotion of their nation to considerably lesser rank. Various other schemes have been discussed to facilitate a settlement, ranging from submerging the problem in an economic union of East and West Bengal to an Indian concession on Kashmir in exchange for a West Pakistani one on Bengal. These are worth exploring, but they seem too complicated and too fragile to withstand the heat of the moment. Perhaps their day will come.

What can the U.S. do? Not a great deal, and that, we have learned the hard way, may not be a bad thing. We should encourage restraint, but not to the point of simply stalemating the conflict for years. Not only the nation but individual citizens should concentrate on the efforts of the various relief agencies to aid the refugees. "Do you really believe the public is interested in what goes on in East Pakistan day by day?" remarked a Chicago news executive. "The average reader is more interested in Ron Santo's diabetes." It would be nice to prove him wrong.

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ONE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

HAS BRITAIN GOT A CHANCE?

It was appropriate that it should have been on November 5—Guy Fawkes day, when England supposedly celebrates, by fireworks, the deliverance of democratic institutions from a dastardly Catholic plot three centuries back or more—that the last desperate attempt should have been made to put a research vehicle into space by means of a British rocket. As I thought about this first regular article for *Commonweal,* I heard on the radio that the rocket had gone wrong somewhere in the stratosphere and fallen ignominiously into the sea. The world's press had been invited to the launch, only to witness the latest in a long series of national humiliations. Just as it usually rains on Guy Fawkes day, and many of the toy rockets fail to go off, so this big rocket had turned into a damp squib. Somehow it seemed symbolic of the whole state of Britain; living on the capital of the past, but collapsing in the present into insignificance. I wasn't really surprised when the rocket went wrong: there was an inevitability about its failure that seemed to fit the occasion perfectly.

A person who saw England through the mirror images of the mass media alone might be well justified in concluding that hardly anything happens here any more. Of course the routine of life must continue, and in a population of fifty-five million people some things can't help occurring. But the striking thing is that the things that matter, the things that are likely to make a difference, all seem to begin somewhere else. The English seem to have ceased making their own destiny. They are letting other people do it for them. Consider a few areas where this seems to be borne out.

Politically, the two issues which dominate the scene

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at the present moment are the European Common Market and the troubles in the North of Ireland. Of course, in the latter case, the ultimate cause of the problem lies with England: directly in that England imposed the constitution that is now breaking down, indirectly in that for centuries England systematically oppressed and spoliated Ireland. But just now, the impression is that England can do nothing but react, mostly in a negative way, to what the Irish themselves are doing. In the case of the Common Market the government is simply asking to be let into an organization which it did nothing to create and over which it has—so many people feel at any rate—very little influence. The interesting things about the Common Market issue are the vagueness of the aspirations of those who are in favor of it (despite the millions of words spoken, the argument is still at the level of the cloudiest of generalities because at the level of facts there is, quite simply, no general agreement at all) and the parochial lack of imagination of those who are against it. The arguments for going in are almost entirely based on blind faith backed up by guesswork: but the arguments for not going in are much the same, based on an astigmatic skepticism also backed up by guesswork. Most people clearly don't want to join: but not for any positive reason, and certainly not because they see any exciting alternative, but simply because they aren't convinced it will do them any good.

Yet it seems to me that the question of Britain's future role in the world is not one that can be decided simply by letting things slide. We cannot just drift into a minor power status, taking on the kind of role that, say, the Scandinavian countries have taken. Perhaps it would be comfortable if we could: but the past is against that. We are in the position of Mrs. Alving, in Ibsen's *Ghosts:* "It's not only the things that we've inherited from our fathers and mothers that live on in us, but all sorts of old dead ideas and old dead beliefs, and things of that sort. They're not actually alive in us, but they're rooted there all the same, and we can't rid ourselves of them. I've only to pick up a newspaper, and when I read it I seem to see ghosts gliding between the lines." And, as Ibsen showed, however hard we may try to convince ourselves that the ghosts are dead they are liable—as in Ireland—to resurrect themselves and even perhaps destroy us. The very fact of having had a great past makes it inevitable that some kind of common belief in a positive role should be sought: the ghosts are there and will not go away.

What I have said about the political arena applies, more or less to the cultural and the religious fields too. To take just one example from my own special field of interest: the state of novel-writing in England seems to me pretty unexciting, and if one were to remove from that scene all the writers who originate from elsewhere it would be worse still. The energy of the neo-realistic novels of the fifties has been dissipated, and nothing new has taken its place. Writers who seemed to promise new beginnings, like William Golding or B.S. Johnson, have—for the moment at any rate—found themselves in barren ground, while the important new fiction is mostly imported—from America or Russia or France or the Third World. Perhaps the best argument for going into the Common Market is one that I heard from a colleague who is a professional musician. He expects the standard of composition in the twelve-tone system to rise. However, although Mr. Heath is known as a musician, this argument did not figure in the so-called "great debate" we were supposed to have been having on the issue.

In religion too, Britain is in the doldrums. The native brands (Anglicanism for example) continue to languish, except where they have been exported overseas. It is there they make news, as in the case of the Dean of Johannesburg. Catholicism, which is mostly Irish, has more life in it, but our ghosts prevent us from going the whole hog like the Dutch. Probably the most exciting things in the religious scene are associated with the Asian immigrants.

This brings me to my main point. It might be asked why, if things are as dull as this, does anybody want to go on living in England? Tourists may find the country exciting as an historical relic, full of old churches, thatched cottages and quaint customs: but we know better. Birmingham is nearer, culturally as well as geographically, to the center of England than Shakespeare's Stratford. What is the future for a country of Birminghams? My answer would be that there is one unique opportunity that we have, and which no other country of comparable size has: the opportunity to create a "multi-cultural society." *Pace* Enoch Powell, Britain has always been racially and culturally mixed. But today the "mix" is potentially richer than ever before. Our "race" problem differs from that of America in that a large proportion of the black population is Asian, and has brought to Britain a cultural heritage which is as old and as distinctive as the cultures of England, Scotland or Wales. This is why there is the chance—just—that Britain might achieve something unique in the history of mankind: a society in which East and West, black and white meet to create a society based on what Roy Jenkins once called "cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance." It is only a slim chance; but perhaps it is the thing that above all else makes it worth while living in Britain for. BRIAN WICKER

(*Brian Wicker is* Commonweal's *correspondent in Great Britain.*)

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THE NEW ROMAN CHURCH: A MODEST PROPOSAL

'Undoubtedly there is a crisis of Catholic sensibility'

JAMES R. KELLY

This article will deal with the church in the most general of terms. I do this deliberately for it seems to me that behind any specific question of ecclesiology lurks the larger one, What think ye of Roman Catholicism? I do not think that it is this or that unresolved item which upsets many reflective Catholics, although many are undoubtedly upset by what they consider to be the grosser failures of the church toward the world, as the lack of a timely prophetic judgment against the war in Asia.

Nor will I spend much time on specific internal problems, such as democracy in the church, divorce, celibacy. Again, each of these problems is important, probably crucial for many. Nevertheless, I think the larger problem which troubles many is that we have come to *feel* differently about the church. Nietzsche wrote somewhere, "It is no longer our reason, but our taste that decides against Christianity." More than any specific argument, I think our taste for Roman Catholicism has altered in some ways, and I think it crucial that the change in taste be seen creatively rather than either defensively or cynically.

If I had to single out in the most economical fashion possible the main elements operative in the shift in the way we perceive Roman Catholicism I would mention first ecumenical awareness. In the past most Catholics were undoubtedly ecumenical enough to suppose that all good men are saved. But, I suspect, the average Catholic felt his church was objectively special in ways that were not theologically sound. He thought non-Catholics were good Christians *despite* their churches. He felt that all that was good in Protestantism was derived from Roman Catholicism. Only Roman Catholicism kept intact the pure deposit of Christianity.

Now, as Vatican II instructs us, Catholics should realize that all Christian churches possess some "ecclesial reality." Protestants are good Christians because of their churches. Moreover, in some ways, Protestant churches can have developed along more Christian lines than Roman Catholicism has. Catholics have not merely learned to concede an ecclesial reality to non-Roman churches but they realize that, in certain questions of theological formulation or church practice, some Protestant churches might have surpassed Roman Catholicism in ways more effectively harmonizing the earliest Christian tradition and modernity. Moreover, without knowing Rahner's technical phrase, many Catholics would now agree with the statement that church history and the history of salvation are not identical. Whoever responds to the presence of God in faithful obedience to his task and creative care for the world can be said to be Christian, although an anonymous one.

The first component, then, in the changing ways Roman Catholics view their church is the explicit realization that Christ's action is not to be identified (a) with Catholicism, (b) with all Christian churches, (c) or even with the sum total of professed Christians.

The second major element in our changing perception of Catholicism, I am convinced, may be seen in the effects of relativism. For the early part of this century Roman Catholicism has had, at least in this country, a strong objectivist ring to it. Most Catholics, even if they lacked formal educational credentials, considered being Roman Catholic an obviously intelligent thing to be. The need for a faith which exceeded the logic of reason was not explicitly denied, of course, but other Christian re-

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ligions seemed to be upstarts, mere watered-down imitations of Roman Catholicism. It struck Roman Catholic ears as silly to hold that in the 16th century God would start all over again with a new church. As for non-Western religions, well, they were a bit too exotic to be taken seriously. Besides, the religions of economically underdeveloped nations were—on the face of it—not likely to be superior to Western Christianity anyway.

If we define relativism as the awareness that faith, religious practices and religious organizations are not directly linked to God's will but are culturally conditioned the products of man's always changing mental categories, then we can suggest that until recently most Roman Catholics believed their church escaped relativism. All significant church beliefs and structures were thought to have been directly commissioned by Jesus himself. Jesus appointed apostles to start his church and, since every group needs some ultimate authority, put Peter in charge. Papacy and episcopacy were to be the main structural elements of authenticity because this obviously reflected the mind of Jesus. Even the less significant rules and regulations of the church, such as the Friday abstinence or lenten regulations, seemed at least indirectly to be objectively rooted in the will of Christ, since the legitimate representatives of Peter and the apostles were advised that Jesus would always be with his church, therefore with the legitimate successors of his apostles.

Recent scholarship has undercut this objectivist mentality. There is increasing uncertainty as to the direct intention of Jesus regarding the work of his followers. We now realize that we know very little about Jesus and what he said. Most of the gospels are reports about how the early Christians reacted to the experience of Jesus. There is a subtle but profound difference in feeling-tone toward the gospels when one realizes that important elements of Christianity were not directly the result of Christ's instructions to his followers, but rather the reactions of his followers to the experience of Jesus. Indeed, the Christian accepts the gospel accounts as normative, because of the privileged position of the first followers—they directly experienced Jesus. Nevertheless, one becomes aware that the emerging church in both beliefs and practices reflects the specific cultural conditions of the early followers as well as any essential core meaning of Christianity.

Although Christians generally remain willing to concede a position of privilege to the apostolic church—after all, they did see Jesus—contemporary man is increasingly reluctant to concede an aura of privilege to any other moment of church history, save his own. If church teaching, practice and polity are patently relative —that is, reflections of a specific historically conditioned perspective—the individual believer finds it less necessary to accept present teaching, practice or polity, unless he feels personally at home in the historically conditioned perspective embodied by the present church. Moreover, this increased realization of the relativity of the empirical church is not completely counterbalanced by the belief that the Holy Spirit remains present in the church. The sophisticated believer realizes that God's fidelity is promised to the church in the most general of ways—best summarized in such minimalist statements as, "The church cannot fail entirely as the institutional pointer to Jesus, who is the clearest manifestation of God's love for humanity." Whether the Holy Spirit guarantees specific constitutive elements of faith and church practice—well, that's another matter.

As Hans Küng remarks, there is nothing irreformable within Roman Catholicism. Dogmatic formulations express Christian truths in words and frames of reference which reflect philosophical systems which no longer strike many as evident. The hallowed trinitarian and christological formulas might not be the most apt formulations of Christian beliefs. In some cases they no longer seem to correctly express core aspects of Christianity. For example, Leslie Dewart claims that since modern man, unlike the Greeks, cannot avoid the thought that personality accounts for existence and nature, not vice versa, he must *feel* that three persons must be three beings, *even if* they all share one and the same substance and nature. Consequently, laboring under an outmoded philosophical framework, immobile formulas of faith actually tend not to protect the Christian message, but to distort it. Insistence on traditional forms of expression can actually undermine the authentic tradition. In the case of the trinitarian formula, Dewart suggests the formula "three persons in one nature" generates among Christians a crypto-tritheism.

The recognition of the relativity of the doctrinal expressions of Christian faith is paralleled by the contemporary attitude toward Catholic moral teaching. Many Catholics empirically reject Papal teaching on birth control and there is increasing skepticism about the absolute ban on abortion and divorce. Indeed, contemporary Catholic moralists emphasize the moral discernment of the individual believer rather than the categorical statements issued by church authorities.

A second component in the changed sensibilty of the Roman Catholic, then, is the adoption of a relativistic perspective. Beliefs, church practices and ethical directives are no longer invested with a direct sacrality (as though God would directly approve of all officially sanctioned elements of church life) but are seen as specifically historical embodiments of Christianity which might or might not adequately harmonize authentic Christian teaching and the requirements of modernity. Automatic acquiescence in any significant area of church life is no longer considered to be even a responsible Christian posture, much less an act of loyalty to the church.

Current theological themes, then, jar the ordinary sensibilities of the adult Roman Catholic. He feels less certain about belonging to a privileged religious group, less

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certain about what he might dogmatically say about Jesus and moral conduct. In all likelihood, the adult Catholic is likely to feel embarrassment over former certitudes such as, "The obviously mistaken character of Protestantism" (now Catholics seek unity with other Christian groups), or, "The obvious wrongness of birth control" (now many Catholics practice non-rhythm methods and no longer find papal arguments intrinsically convincing on the matter), or, "The absolute wrongness of abortion" (but in some cases it seems the more moral course of action; as when the life of a mother with other children is seriously endangered), or "The obvious sinfulness of divorce" (but some marriages are, really, impossible; Christianity cannot mean the continuation of publicly enforced lovelessness).

Undoubtedly there is a crisis of Catholic sensibility. The bride of Christ seems a bit tawdry. By the standards of contemporary liberal thought she has not been particularly zealous about the pressing human problems of peace, race and poverty. By contemporary moral standards she has been plainly wrong on specifics of her teaching on human sexuality. By contemporary standards she has been rigid and unfeeling in many of her administrative policies, such as enforced priestly celibacy and liturgical experimentation. Whereas the church formerly seemed to nurture faith, for many she presently strains faith. There is, then, if not a crisis of faith, a crisis of Catholic sensibility. (There might be increasingly a crisis of faith too. Since most of what men think is based not on strictly logical or reasoned grounds, but involves more affectively charged elements, it is always difficult to determine the boundary between a crisis of sensibility and one of faith. But that is another and more difficult question which will not be pursued here.)

Clearly the church has renounced any self-view which tended to invest her with a monopoly on the "good," whether the good be defined in terms of ethical conduct, political wisdom, or, even more within her own ambit, the entire spectrum of Christian values authentically preserved. Different authors express this conception in various ways, but the meaning is similar. In *Church: The Continuing Quest,* Richard P. McBrien describes the change in ecclesiological consciousness expressed in Vatican II documents as involving the perception that the church was no longer to be seen initially or primarily as the scholastic-doctrinal method saw it—as a juridically, hierarchically constituted society which exists to communicate the grace of redemption to all mankind. And in his essay "Church and World" Karl Rahner warns against the fundamental ecclesiological heresy of integrism. Essentially integrism regards the world as mere material for the action and self-manifestation of the church, and wants to integrate the world into the church. From an integrist perspective all correct earthly action is nothing but the putting into practice of the principles taught, expounded and applied by the church.

Curiously enough, current definitions of the church are, at the same time, modest and daring. Hans Küng distinguishes between the church and the reign of God and describes the church as the eschatological community of salvation which awaits the kingdom of God and which acts as an anticipatory sign of the definitive reign of God: ". . . a sign of the reality of the reign of God already present in Jesus Christ, a sign of the coming completion of the reign of God." For Küng, then, the church cannot be identified with what, in fact, is her final principle, the anticipation of God's final dealing with the history of man.

Karl Rahner defines the church simply as the official presence of the grace of Christ in the public history of the one human race. Again, a modest proposal insofar as the "official presence of the grace of Christ in public history" clearly leaves room for Christ's action in an unofficial, non-institutional fashion.

Finally, in his definiton of the church Richard P. McBrien includes elements of Küng's definition (an eschatological sign) and Rahner's (the public presence of Christ's action) and adds the note that the church exists to serve mankind in the socio-political order:

> The church is the community of those who confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ, who ratify that faith in baptism, and who thereby commit themselves to membership and mission within that sacramental community of faith. But the primarily reality is the Kingdom of God, and the existence and function of the church makes no sense apart from it. That mission is threefold in relationship to the reign of God: to proclaim in word and sacrament the definitive arrival of the kingdom in Jesus of Nazareth (*kerygma*), to offer itself as a test case of its own proclamation, as a group of people transformed by the Spirit into a community of faith, hope, love and truthfulness—a sign of the Kingdom on earth and an anticipation of the Kingdom of the future (*koinonia*), and finally to realize and extend the reign of God through service in the socio-political order (*diakonia*).

As I have suggested, these contemporary visions of the church are both modest and daring. First, let me say just a few words about Roman Catholic modesty.

I do not suspect that, in the past, Roman Catholics were, in the aggregate, more prideful than the ordinary run of man. But Catholic institutional expectations were enormously high. A detailed Catholic position was expected on almost every significant human question, from the art of politics to individual sexual morality. The entire range of human virtue and highest levels of intellectuality were expected to be empirically present in the church. The lament in the late '50s, "Where are the Catholic intellectuals?", was felt as a direct attack on the church. In the recent past converts were eagerly counted

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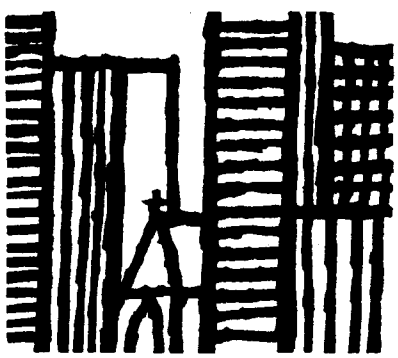
and, to indulge in a bit of a caricature, to Catholics one of the main difficulties in the world seemed to be the blindness of those refusing the ministrations of the Catholic church.

But increasingly the church realizes the distinction between fidelity to the message of Christ and wisdom about the running of the world. As Rahner suggests, it is no longer possible for the church to give directly concrete prescriptions regarding detailed economic organization, the actual direction of culture, space travel and the entire range of difficult contemporary issues. (Although individual Christians with the proper competence might relate these issues to an informed Christian position.) Rather than expect a detailed grasp of complex social and political questions increasingly the church will proclaim the general principles of the dignity of



man, freedom, justice and love. There is a scaling-down of expectations regarding the official church's intellectual service to mankind.

The church is also becoming more modest in her estimation of her present internal forms and structures. For example, there is a growing awareness that the present system of church polity represents neither an inviolable biblical heritage nor a necessary contemporary form of government. Taking the New Testament as normative, there is no evidence of a fixed and exclusive number of permanent ministries which would be valid for all communities. In fact, in the communities founded by St. Paul there is no evidence of a monarchical episcopate. Indeed, there appears to have been no ordination in the Pauline communities. There is no mention anywhere in Paul's letters of laying on of hands.

As the example of church polity shows, the church will become increasingly modest about the status of most of the present ways she organizes herself and thinks about herself. Institutional modesty, then, seems increasingly inevitable in the church. The related question, of course, is whether Catholic institutional modesty marks an increase in spiritual sophistication or the regretful canonization of a growing ecclesial mediocrity. Obviously the question cannot be decided on an *a priori* basis. The state of Catholicism will reflect at any given historical time the wisdom of her leaders, the loyalty of her members and the creative spirituality of all. Christ promised not to save the church from banality but only from irrevocable destruction. And, needless to say, there are many gradient points between total destruction and banality. Nevertheless, the advent of institutional modesty within Catholicism potentially represents an increase in daringness which, I will simply assert, is fully consonant with the best Roman Catholic instincts.

There is in contemporary culture a positive mistrust of any institutional patterning. To use Marris' and Rein's phrase from *Dilemmas of Social Reform,* there is a commonly held theory of 'institutional pathology.' If delineated the theory would express the sentiment that institutions inevitably block progress and maintain obsolete values in support of present discriminatory power arrangements. I do not wish to directly discuss this usually unthematized theory (save concede its large dosage of truth), but merely point out that many of our specific reactions toward the church are probably influenced by our more general animus toward all social structures.

In an era like our own, marked by institutional inflexibility and the search for creative community affiliation, the church can play a significant role. If the authors I have cited—Rahner, Küng, McBrien—are in any way representative of future church trends, the church will become more open to change in all areas and less upset about her narrowing public role. She will increasingly become "the socially constituted community of those who freely believe in Christ, joined with him and with one another in their love of him."

A basic Roman Catholic instinct is, I submit, the strong rejection of a solipsistic religious orientation. Deep within Roman Catholic sensibility is the strong feeling that if God cares for the world, and manifests his care and loving intent for the world in Jesus, this good news will not be given to an elect few but made available to the ordinary mass of men. Roman Catholicism's discomfiture with sectarianism does not merely derive from the desire to maintain control over its membership (although historically it is partially that) but also from the conviction that God acting in history in the person of Jesus is so crucial for man, that this occurrence cannot be the private truth of an elect group, whether the group's self-selection is based on superior powers of mind, culture, conscience, or political impulse.

For the sake of this daring Catholic instinct—namely, that the church must be large enough to encompass even those regarded by the morally sensitive as regressive—the Catholic is willing, to an extent, to suffer the embarrassments caused by the hypocrisy which all organized life inevitably spawns. In other words, despite the realization that many of the present forms of his faith are relativistic, a mixture of authentic Christianity and obsolete cultural forms, the Catholic believer, for the sake of keeping alive the inner dynamism of Catholicism—the conviction that through Jesus the mystery of God's dealing with the world is most creatively expressed for

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all men—publicly aligns himself with organized Catholicism.

In addition to the desire to be part of a religious group which, at least in its highest expressed ideals, is based on the experience of Christ and the desire to embody this experience in social forms available to all categories of men, the committed Catholic believer will also, I suspect, be influenced by a common sense which in fact approaches sophisticated humanism. He will realize that if life is a mere succession of unrelated and insignificant acts, with no inner telos and no strong bonds of community, then the inner sense of one's own reality tends to disappear.

The invitation that the church offers to those interested in publicly linking their lives with hers is the strong sense that Christ is experienced most explicitly within her worship and witness, and that this witness reveals to the world the hidden secret of all authentic human striving—that God promises an abiding significance to all human actions performed with love and intending love. Membership no longer means the automatic conferral of a static spiritual identity but an invitation to participate in a changing tradition, one marked by an increasing openness to other spiritual traditions, a sense of creative doubt toward many of her present embodiments, and a heightened realization that she will be judged by others not so much by what she professes but by her ability to inspire her membership to labor creatively for a future more in accord with the ideals she shares with other traditions—an increased respect for the dignity of each man effectively realized in the structural arrangements of society.

STORMBIRD OF THE WORKING CLASS

And, oh, how he sang

SAUL MALOFF

By way of preliminary apology I offer as excuse for this small memoir my long-standing conviction that Clifford Odets was one of those writers—Wolfe is perhaps the classic example, Lawrence in his moister and more inflamed passages another: the long list contains the wreckage of our youth—who stormed the vulnerable young with a far greater impact than far better writers, including great ones; and whom later, when the fevers had receded, one couldn't go back to on a dare. More than the others. Odets was a writer (for me and my friends *the* writer) of a special time and place and mood (the Thirties, the City, and what we may now but couldn't then call Radical Apocalyptic), when he seemed at the very least the American Chekhov, the exemplum and vindication of socialist aesthetics, voice and tribune of The People (a much-battered term then as now), that voice through him risen to sheerest eloquence, never more so than when it seemed most tortured by—indeed most lyrically proclaimed—its inability to articulate its deepest sentiments and dreams; the voice, in fact, which seemed to us the literary embodiment of the Future itself.

When Odets arrived, waking one morning to find himself famous, our Jewish proletarian Byron, the Revolution seemed to us won by that act, having discovered the language and form of its advent. My lofty (or grandiose) tone intends to be one of gentle and affectionate self-mockery; yet there's no other way to account for the excitement that greeted *Waiting for Lefty* and *Awake and Sing!* It was as if Marx had written agit-prop plays instead of *The Eighteenth Brumaire* and Debs had spoken spontaneously a kind of urban demotic English in which you could dimly make out the syntax, rhythms and locutions of Yiddish. Those among us who were seized, at the age of 12 or 13, by the lunatic idea of "being a writer" formed an important part of our conception of what a writer was and should be (poet-revolutionary) on the example of Odets—with long-lasting effects, all of them bad. Wolfe and Hemingway didn't help matters, and neither did Steinbeck nor Saroyan nor —but that's another story.

For us, Odets seemed closer for other reasons, accidents that seemed charged with meaning; for metaphysical determinists in kneepants, there were no accidents. Monopoly capitalism had developed with dialectical inevitability; the Messiah would appear not where *he* chose, but where the forces of History determined. That place, as it "happened," was on our block. Not quite but nearly; if not on the block then up the block, "up" being anywhere off the block while still within the reach of hard traveling. If the purity of the myth requires a bit of geographical juggling so much the worse for geography. Actually Odets was born in Philadelphia (that is no country for Messiahs); his parents moved to the Bronx when he was two, which is almost as good as being born there, two being prior to anyone's idea

SAUL MALOFF, *the author of* Happy Families *(Scribner's), has just completed a new novel.*

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of ripeness and moral responsibility, as any trained dialectician can tell you. And though Odets' neighborhood was not exactly ours, in a time when neighborhoods were literally defined by single blocks—islands in hostile seas (in our case just that, a bedrock working-class Jewish street which included a few radical philosemites who had married in for amorous or ideological reasons, surrounded by rampaging Coughlinites, Jew-baiting hawkers of *Social Justice*).

Odets' neighborhood was slightly to the north and east of ours and different from ours in tone and degree by virtue (by vice) of its possession of a scattering of lower middle-class apartment houses among the tenements, in contrast to our street of identical old-law tenements. The functional distinction between a tenement and an apartment house was less a matter of relative newness and elegance than that between a walkup and what was called an elevator building (self-operated—flunky-operated ones were galaxies not neighborhoods away). An "elevator building" was to us what Renaissance palazzos must have been to Tuscan peasants or those Great Neck neo-Renaissance palazzos to Jay Gatsby—where the capitalists, grown fat on sweated surplus labor, lived like kings. Some kings! Some capitalists! Some palazzos! Button-hole sub-contractors wiped out by the Depression or barely hanging on. But then we didn't know that: a capitalist was a capitalist, some bigger, some smaller, but still a capitalist; just as a king, whether of Imperial Britain or of some oilwell of a sheikdom on the Persian Gulf, was still a king. King or capitalist, big or small, we knew what to do with all of them when the Day came, as, sooner or later, come it must. In a phrase: they'd get theirs! To get the feel of what life might be like after we had expropriated the expropriators and the State had withered away, we would play hookey from school and sneak into those marbled halls and ride the elevators, up and down, up and down, till the moment when the housewives laden with groceries and unable to get the elevators to stop would set up a hue and cry until the cossacks and gendarmes (the janitors actually, called superintendents in elevator buildings, all of them agents or kulaks and Czars and the White generals) drove us from the fortress we had briefly occupied. In one of them Odets lived, dreaming of flight.

If Odets had not our luck in being *echt* prole, he crossed the line by coming to our neighborhood to attend Morris H.S., at that time packed with smart Jewish kids bound for glory and situated in the heart of Morrisania, now the Bronx's very own Black-Puerto Rican ghetto. (There must be a simpler explanation than ours as to why he didn't go to James Monroe H.S., which was considerably closer for him. Our myth held that he had cast his lot in an act of proletarian solidarity.) American literature's first high school dropout, Odets left some sort of impression on at least one teacher, for when we got there, not long after his star erupted across the heavens, our (honors class) English teacher, one of the few resident WASPs in a faculty still dominated by Irish Catholics, and by then quite senile (the man would unaccountably burst into little off-key snatches of turn-of-the-century music-hall tunes accompanied by stumbling, rhythmically unrelated soft-shoe routines), enthralled us with monitory tales of a wild unkempt boy whose so-called English was incorrigible, a hopeless immigrant hybrid of a linguistic sub-species who in the teeth of his handicap scribbled all the time. Mr. Emerson had been the last gentleman of our literature, though there were those avant-gardists who argued for Mr. Howells and now boys like this one who spoke a language called Gutteral in the accents of the tenements, unruly boys whose "bushy" hair perched spikily in all directions and whose features, like their wiry hair, seemed "negroid"—such boys had the East European effrontery to aspire to the life of Letters; pushy, like the rest of their people. Yet he had heard in the Faculty Lounge that this boy, Clifford something-or-other, had had some sort of vulgar success in the playhouses. What had we come to? What would they think of next? He thanked God he wouldn't be here to see it. As the teacher of "Creative Writing" he awarded me that year's prize—a book and a certificate; the latter I rejected with contempt (my friends thought I should burn it at Assembly but I was never one for making scenes), though even then I couldn't keep my hands off books. I rejected the certificate in the name of the International Proletariat and of Clifford Odets; exploited workers and peasants everywhere, whether in decaying tenements or petit-bourgeois elevator buildings; and foremost among these Clifford Odets. As for the teacher—ideological hireling of the oppressors—he assuredly would *not* be here to see "it": long before that he'd get his, but good, when it came time to pass out rewards and punishments.

And as for Odets—we called him Clifford then—that "stormbird of the working class" (one of his celebrated figures of speech, the verbal equivalent of the raised fist) knew exactly where the class war was deployed. In *Waiting for Lefty*, the signal appears like a clarion call, a coded message beamed specially to us who would understand the reference and know how to interpret it. The scene needs placing for a generation that scarcely knows the name Odets, let alone anything else about him. Sid and Florrie, the young cabdriver and his girl, deeply in love, must part, for who can afford to get married in the Depression? Poverty kills love, an axiom of the time. The capitalists, like the Capulets and the Montagues before them, won't even allow young lovers to love. Florrie says it doesn't matter that they can't afford a place of their own; love is love and will win out. No, Sid says, his heart breaking, impossible—they can't go on meeting night after night after night in the only place poor lovers can meet—in Crotona Park.

Crotona Park—the very words were like a bell, a gun-

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shot heard throughout the block, echoing from one end (Prospect Avenue) to the other (Wilkins Avenue), audible as far as Boston Road, which was *around* the block and therefore foreign territory. Crotona Park East, the block I was born and grew up on, is the block I've been talking about all along; directly across a narrow road from it stands the Park itself, the one by the naming of which Odets had immortalized us, the one where, in going forth to do daily battle with the Coughlinite fascists, we fought the class war to a stand-off round the clock. Crotona Park was our Winter Palace, our Paris Commune, our Yenan, our Bastille, our Teruel and Barcelona—our Spain. Crotona Park was the true scene of our growing up, night and day, winter and summer, our Yale and Harvard (as Melville said of his whaling ships, for the Park was to us what the Pequod was to Ishmael). We learned to shoot crap and deal pinochle there, to field grounders and shag flies, to know the odds and how to play them. There we learned that girls were different from us; the difference between draw and closed poker; the difference between Utopian and Scientific Socialism,

the Gothic Novel and the Gotha Programme. All this Odets meant to us; and in his celebrated play, by the cunning insertion of a place-name charged with symbolic significance for those in the know, he flashed us the rainbow sign. When we had stormed the Kingdom of Necessity and inaugurated the Kingdom of Freedom, everyone would get theirs, for good or for ill. When *Waiting for Lefty* and *Awake and Sing!* issued the final warning to the imperialists, we were 12 and 13 years old, and our minds were unencumbered by doubts.

By 1952, the year of the locust and Odets' public disgrace, he had long since become for me an episode, hardly imaginable, of my mythicized childhood: the natural erosions of time; shifts in my tastes, literary and in consequence critcal, that amounted to geological upheavals; Odets' migration to Hollywood and the accompanying downward course of his talent, or rather the progressive exposure of its thinness and meretriciousness once the first fine flush had dimmed. The language, Odets' unmistakable signature, which had once seemed so morning-fresh, became mechanical and contrived—or inept, tone-deaf, even grotesquely self-parodic—as a distinctive literary language is apt to do when it has lost its subject. In retrospect even the original language lost much of its charm—a mere matter of the shock of recognition, of hearing one's own private language (long before, it must be remembered, the postwar emergence of armed battalions of Jewish writers fashioning a supple and vital American idiom, whose ancestry was street-argot and Yiddish, into a wonderfully expressive language) made public, which was a little like discovering that Mama had all along been talking literature. Now, that language had become material for a game of sitting in a picture palace watching movies Odets had written or worked on and spotting his "lines," paste gems in a setting of utter banality. It was like watching Lefty Grove after he had lost his fastball, or Joe Louis at the sad end of his career still miming those beautiful moves though the punches weren't landing and even when they occasionally did they lacked the old, sweet authority. Billy Rose, intending praise of the highest order, spoke of Odets' folksy lyricism as "words that tinkle," which in Rose's book is praise indeed.

In 1952 Odets "appeared" before the House Committee on Un-American Activities as a "friendly" witness and spilled his guts all over the hearing-room floor. He couldn't stop running off at the mouth; that stormbird of the working class really sang. He was so friendly he embarrassed his hosts, who had asked him in for a short convivial drink only to have him turn up with a suitcase filled with many complete changes of clothes. Odets had come to make a clean breast of it: after going through the expected paces by providing the information asked for and "naming names," he got to *his* purpose, which was to make a free gift of the burden of his life to his interlocutors and so by the magic of confession to dispose of it.

No doubt this is grossly unfair, or at least uncompassionate. I am trying to recover the outraged sense of personal betrayal I felt at the time, and in a more muted way feel now. Although Odets as a writer had long since ceased to mean very much to me, I found to my surprise that as a totem he was still alive. Elia Kazan sang also, but though I thought him leprous, what was he to me? Another singer, another informer in a long queue, radiating out from Washington to the four corners of the land, all of them lurching for the bar of judgment and absolution in their rush to get there first, lists in hand, crying: Me next! Me next! Some "information." The louts of HUAC were edified to learn how some depressing men met in solemn conclave after solemn conclave and bored one another beyond endurance with their interminable jabbering about Art being a weapon, dialectically speaking; and how others plotted diabolically to work into some nth-rate movie some sly reference to The People rising like a phoenix from its ashes—thereby losing China for us, yielding up the mysteries of the atom to the Russians, and later causing the French débâcle at Dien Bien Phu. If there is a Hell, as surely there is, it is listening forever amidst the licking

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flames to lectures on Socialist Realism delivered by the late V. J. Jerome, before whom all America trembled; and if there is a God, as after all this there must be, Martin Dies and all his successors are spending eternity at those seminars, taking copious notes for the Final Examination, which is rigged to assure perpetual failure.

But Clifford? I remember feeling, regressively: We counted on you. We knew you weren't too strong in the head—but it's not the head that matters, it's the heart. How could you forget what in Crotona Park was primal knowledge, what the dumbest kid on the block knew in his bones: You tell Them *nothing,* absolutely nothing. A stone you give them; you don't give them the time of day. Instead what did Odets do? He unpacked his heart like a whore.

All this is by way of accounting for the critical, intellectual, and I suppose emotional, block I ran into when I undertook to write about Odets. Breaking out of the Bronx, which is a continent away from Manhattan, was a motive-force in our lives, as it is in his plays; and for me he was the writer who, when the walls of the tenement seemed to enclose the knowable world, sang of a world elsewhere though he couldn't imagine or by his acts live it; who composed a hopped-up language for our discontents, and then spent the rest of his life writing about promises betrayed and redemption still hoped for.

For a reliable account you must go to Gerald Weales' *Clifford Odets: Playwright* (Bobbs-Merrill, $6.95). Weales' book, as its sub-title suggests, is essentially a reading of the plays—and though it is not nor does it intend to be a social history and full-blown critical biography, Weales has a feel of the period and there is a sufficiency of biographical material wherever the life and times shed any significant light on the works. The book's particular strength lies in its dramaturgic analyses, which never fail to illuminate the interplay of theme and structure, language and imagery. Moreover, it is marked at all points by an attractive reticence of manner and temperateness of tone. The besetting sin of almost any book wholly devoted to a single body of work is that the author—if for no other reason than to justify the expense of so much spirit—is likely to make exaggerated claims for his subject; in this respect as in all others Weales is without stain.

If in fact he claims for Odets somewhat more than I am willing to grant, he also lays out the strongest possible case: unillusioned, cogent, balanced, unfalteringly intelligent. Apart from Harold Clurman's *The Fervent Years* (which is, among other things, a history of the Group Theater, Odets' forcing-ground and the source of so much in the history of American theater), all previous studies of Odets are without merit. I find it hard to imagine that Weales' will not stand as definitive, for it is a model of judiciousness and critical decorum.

STRIPPING FOR PLEASURE AND PROFIT

●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●

Why Jink Ray and seventy armed neighbors stood off the bulldozers

JAMES BRANSCOME

America has long taken pleasure and profit from Appalachia's land and people. Sick hillbilly jokes and coal have kept America chuckling and prosperous since the riches of the region were discovered late in the last century. In the late 1950s the urge for profit took a new and ominous turn with the introduction of technology making profitable the large scale stripmining of coal. Lagging development of alternative power sources and skyrocketing demand for electrical power sent strip-mine coal production and profit up in exponential curves of economic delight in the late 1960s. The 1970s will determine whether profit or saving the Appalachian people and environment is of value to this country. The odds are, given the history of Appalachia, that the stripminers will win despite the overwhelming evidence that stripmining should be abolished and despite growing regional opposition to this destructive mining method and the powers that practice it.

The process of stripmining alone is frightening enough. Contour stripping, the type which is practiced on the hills and mountains of Appalachia, begins with bulldozers and explosives cutting and blasting the earth and rock covering a coal seam. The cutting and blasting form a shelf and a man-made cliff or "highwall" at a right angle to the shelf. The blasted and churned earth is pushed over the shelf to form a massive, unstable "spoil bank." Thus a mountain is permanently scarred before a ton of coal is removed. Then power shovels and the bulldozers tear the coal loose and load it in 30-ton trucks, which, at that weight, warp and crack public roads, seldom with any reprimand from public officials.

That's the way this nation gets 44 percent of its coal

JAMES BRANSCOME *is Director of Save Our Kentucky, Inc., and Coordinator of the Appalachian Coalition, a five-state coalition of groups opposed to stripmining.*

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Two Birds

WITH ITS FOUR new foreign correspondents— Brian Wicker from Britain, Alain Woodrow from France, Harry ten Kortenaar from Rome and John Horgan from Ireland — *Commonweal* makes a more welcome gift than ever this Christmas.

All such insightful *Commonweal* contributors as Saul Maloff, Michael Novak, Doris Grumbach, Todd Gitlin, Michael Harrington, Gregory Baum, Harvey Cox, Mary Daly and Gordon Zahn.

Then add such enlightening reviewers as Nora Magid, Garry Wills, James Finn, Martin Marty, Ronald Christ, W. Carey McWilliams, Avery Dulles, Leonard Kriegel and Maisie Ward — and you have a winning combination.

As we wrote last week, we believe that this adds up to a good solution for the friend or relative who likes good reading. But it also provides a solution of a *Commonweal* problem as well; it helps meet our current need for new readers.

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and the percentage is growing. In Kentucky stripmining will outproduce deepmining to make the state the country's leading coal producer—a distinction many Kentuckians could do without. If this nation continues to feed its "energy crisis," 600,000 acres of Kentucky and 16,000 square miles of the United States in 26 states eventually will be stripped barren and lifeless. Already an area twice the size of Connecticut has been stripped.

But the real price of stripmining, as opposed to its short-term and questionable benefits, shows up after the strippers have left the scene of their crime. That price is exacted from the people, the land and the water.

For the people who live in the stripmine areas of Appalachia, stripmining is essentially a depopulation program. Separately or in combination, mudslides, increased flooding because of denuded watersheds, acid and silted streams, and boulders sent flying by blasting, have stimulated the flow of Appalachian refugees to Chicago, Cincinnati, Detroit and Baltimore. Perry County, Kentucky, which is the most stripmined county in the state, lost population during the last decade while neighboring Leslie County, which has less stripmining, gained population. A West Virginia woman lived because she happened to step away from her stove when a basketball-sized rock dropped through the kitchen roof, landing where she had stood a moment before. Blasting on a strip site half a mile away sent the rock on its errant trajectory. Apologies from the mine operators were too late to settle her nerves or calm her anger.

The greatest threat to the people who live close by streams in the hollows of Kentucky, West Virginia, Virginia and Tennessee has yet to be realized. That threat is a great Appalachian flood, a flood that needs only a modern-day Noah to reach Biblical proportions. In the early spring heavy rain and resultant flooding is commonplace in the mountains where average yearly rainfall often is as high as 70 inches. But where once the floods deposited a rich layer of silt on bottomland farms with minimal damage to homes and barns, towns and cities, the spring rains now bring, more often than not, silt and rock to choke stream beds and acid water to kill the soil's fertility, to swirl through and destroy the homes of the poor. This because soil erosion from stripmined surfaces has been measured at a rate 1,000 times greater than from adjacent undisturbed land, because the barren hills no longer hold back the rain but send it speedily to the bottom, and because water combines with iron pyrites, sulphur, manganese, and cadmium on stripmine sites, forming lethal compounds and acids which sterilize streams and poison wells. A study of effects of stripmining on the Beaver Creek Basin conducted over an 11-year period (1955-1966) concluded: "Stripmining of coal in the Beaver Creek Basin in south central Kentucky has significantly increased the acidity and mineralization of surface and ground water and increased the sediment content of the stream in the mined areas. These

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effects in turn have reduced or eliminated the aquatic life in the stream." The study also reported that vegetation on a spoil bank in the basin area was 95 per cent "non-existent."

Taken together, barren hillsides of unstable rock and soil, plus streams clogged with silt and dead with acid offer ideal conditions for flooding. The fact that 12,000 miles of streams in eastern Kentucky alone have been degraded by acid is sobering and an indication of things to come. The possibility of a great Appalachian flood is there. All that is needed are heavy rains similar to those in the winter and spring of 1927 and 1957 and Appalachia, the east's great watershed of coal, labor and water, will be destroyed. Even if there is no great flood, each year smaller floods will winnow away at the homes and land of Appalachia. Each year there will be many examples comparable to the experience of the Petros, Tennessee, farmer who lost garden, yard and lumber because Crooked Fork Creek had been filled with stripmine debris.

To counter this vast destruction and potential for vast destruction, state governments and coal company public relations men have engaged in a fiction called reclamation. Harry Caudill, author of *Night Comes to the Cumberlands,* says that reclamation is similar to promising to restore a virgin to her original condition after she has been raped. In fact, reclamation is no more feasible than restoring virginity. Reclamation consists of seeding stripmine sites with grass, trees or legumes and building silt dams to trap sediment in ponds rather than sending it down stream. What usually happens is that the vegetation dies and the silt dams quickly fill up and break.

Three states in the Appalachian coal fields, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Kentucky, reputedly have strong reclamation laws. In all three states reclamation has produced dismal results. Even those charged with enforcing the regulations are not enthusiastic. Bill Hayes, a district supervisor for the Kentucky Department of Reclamation, has described the regulations he enforces as "inadequate." Norm Williams, who helped enforce West Virginia's stripmine regulations, quit his job last fall, saying that reclamation did not work. He supported a ban on stripping in West Virginia.

In the few cases where adequate reclamation has been tried the cost has been great enough to negate the value of the coal mined. For example, the Pennsylvania state government spent $10,000 an acre to reclaim stripped-land in Moraine State Park to effective use. In Elkins, West Virginia, the state studied the feasibility only of stabilizing the land on a stripmined area and found the costs to be $2,000 per acre. A federal study estimated that the cost of restoring the Coal River Watershed in West Virginia would be 26 million dollars, probably an amount equal to the private profit taken by the stripmine operators.

It is clear that the benefits of stripmining (namely the quick, cheap production of coal by fewer men) are far outweighed by the disadvantages. The mystery is that state and federal governments, with their own interest at stake, have not acted to ban or more strictly control stripmining. The answer lies partly in the power of coal and the forces that lobby for it. But a more complete answer is the powerlessness of the Appalachian people who have been systematically robbed of the riches of their coal and timber. Powerlessness invites exploitation. Corporations and government have gotten in the habit of riding roughshod over the land and people because they are different, because they are poor. Bethlehem Steel, the American Association (with 9,000 London stockholders) and Union Carbide have had a great time and a great profit for decades. The Tennessee Valley Authority, a supposedly environmental improvement agency, is the largest culprit in the purchase of stripmined coal. Fortunately, powerlessness also breeds a passion for control over one's life and land. That passion, a prime reason why Appalachian mountaineers settled in their highlands, is manifesting itself again in growing resistance to stripmining. The opposition has taken the form of organizations, civil disobedience and acts of sabotage on bulldozers and power shovels. West Virginia Congressman Ken Hechler, supported by people throughout the mountains, has introduced legislation to ban stripmining nationwide. The Kentucky legislature early next year will consider a bill that would phase out stripmining in the state in one year. In Virginia anti-stripmining groups are forming. West Virginians again are gearing up to lobby their legislature for a ban on stripping. In Tennessee the outrage over stripping grows and the state's senior U.S. Senator, Howard Baker, now acknowledges that stripping must be stopped in mountainous areas.

Each new, out-in-the-open, anti-stripmining organizations reminds the coal operators that they are no longer free agents. Each new organization also reminds them of Widow Ollie Combs lying in front of a bulldozer, Dan Gibson standing off seventeen state policemen and the strippers with his rifle; Bessie Smith standing in front of an overloaded Mack truck and Jink Ray and his seventy armed neighbors daring the bulldozers to move one more inch. Even more ominous for the stripminers was the night in August 1968 when $750,000 worth of equipment was destroyed with dynamite. These are isolated events, but they are famous in the mountains and have helped build a spirit of resistance. These examples have helped break down the shibboleth of coal as King and sparked a new openness in stripmining opposition. It may be too much to hope that stripmining will be abolished in Appalachia, but more and more people are agreeing with Mrs. Katherine Haynes whose home and farm were threatened by stripmining. "God never meant for the land to be tore up like it is," she said. God willing, it won't be much longer.

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BOOKS

CRITICS' CHOICES FOR CHRISTMAS

SAUL MALOFF

SAUL MALOFF, *the author of* Happy Families *(Scribner's), has just finished a new novel.*

In A Free State, by V. S. Naipaul (Knopf, $5.95). Naipaul, as readers of his novels know, is a writer of formidable talents; decidedly one of the better writers in English—and already, in mid-career, the author of a book that may well turn out to be a classic of historical writing, *The Loss of El Dorado.* A Trinidadian of East Indian descent living in London, Naipaul has suffered the fate of other good writers from obscure places, a curious form of cultural imperialism: general neglect together with critical esteem. His new book is an odd collection (two stories, a novella, with Prologue and Epilogue) that manages by sly interplay of tangentially related motifs to become an organic whole. The novella, which bears the volume's title, is a wonderfully turned little work of art, a subtle, beautifully sustained "study" of English *colons* in the strange, wholly alien atmosphere of an African state torn by civil strife.

The Book of Daniel, by E. L. Doctorow (Random House, $6.95). The protagonist is the son of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg (of course the names are changed). Years after their execution, now grown to young manhood he sets out on a voyage of discovery, internal and external, in an effort to recover his childhood, to find out who his parents humanly were, to seek out their betrayer, to absorb the awful events, to contain the damage and transform it into knowledge, compassion, forgiveness, a kind of love that shores up and enables life. A novel, I'd have said, impossible to write without stridency, hysteria, melodramatics. Doctorow does not try to escape these; he does something more difficult—he turns them to account; and against very great odds brings off a novel of appalling force, certainly one of the more impressive novels of the year. That it manages to be—in the less evident but more serious sense—a political novel without ever ceasing to be a novel in the first and last place, is far from the least of its remarkable virtues.

The Collected Stories of Flannery O'Connor (Farrar, Straus, $10). At last a "collected" works that is a seemly act of homage to a marvelous writer from whom we shall have no more. This definitive volume does exactly what such a volume should: it makes the largest claim for a writer who is as likely to become "permanent" as any of her generation.

The following books were first published earlier than this year but have recently been brought out in paperback edition. The English critic V. S. Pritchett's chronicle of his boyhood, *A Cab at the Door* (Vintage—Random House, $7.95), must take its place among the enduring works of its kind: a finely evocative, moving though unsentimental, richly human memoir. Pritchett seeks his sources and writes of his London in the early years of the century with the rich comic and social sense of a "Victorian" novelist, and commands the "plain style" as no one else now writing.

Of the avalanche of writings pouring out of "radical feminism," the two most compelling, most forcefully argued books are Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (Bantam, $1.25) and Eva Figes' *Patriarchal Attitudes* (Fawcett, .95). Guffawers, sniggerers, male chauvinists and other pigs needn't bother (they'll be dealt with in due course); but if any reasonable person still needs persuading that we are witnessing the gathering of an impulse of deepest revolutionary implications, he (and she) can begin the painful, purgative process of self-examination right here.

MARTIN E. MARTY

MARTIN E. MARTY *is professor of modern church history at the University of Chicago, and author of* Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America.

One way to sort through a year's worth of books is to ask which ones I would be most reluctant to give up at the end of the year. Many books have momentary pleasure or address themselves to a passing situation, but find no permanent place in a library. Others work their way quietly into one's consciousness and remain there.

I'll pass rather quickly over the books from my own field which made my list because I had to read them as an historian. Robert Middlekauff, *The Mathers* (Oxford, $12.50) will be savored and debated for years to come, while William G. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent, 1630-1833* (Harvard, two volumes, $35) represents the kind of original digging that the rest of us are always going to get around to but seldom do. "In my field, but not my period," as historians are wont to say, is Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)* (University of Chicago, $15), the first volume in his multi-volume history of the development of doctrine. You don't have to be an historian to appreciate the grand scope and original presentations of these three books.

Sometimes a book makes the list for personal reasons. Herman Kogan and Robert Cromie, *The Great Fire: Chicago 1871* appeals to the provincial Chicago-nut in me. You have to be interested in either a) Chicago; b) fires; or c) well put-together historical picture books to appreciate this choice, but in

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my own circle there are great numbers of such people. No run-of-the-coffee-table book, this one collects all the important photographs having to do with one of America's most-remembered tragedies.

Three works having to do with the past of American people will surely find a permanent place on my shelves. C. W. Ceram, *The First American* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, $9.95) is an example of what I suppose should be called *haute vulgarisation*, but I would accent the *haute*. Snippy scholars can find fault here and there with Ceram's account of what North American archaeology turns up, but he is reliable and is a spell-binding storyteller.

T. C. McLuhan, *Touch the Earth* (Outerbridge and Dienstfrey, $6.95) is a "self-portrait of Indian Existence," a remarkably spiritual "in their own words" summary of Indian existence and attitudes. The photographs by Edward S. Curtis were taken early in this century; the publisher's choice of sepia tones for them seems perfectly appropriate.

William Maxwell, *Ancestors* (Knopf, $6.95) finds the *New Yorker* writer retracing steps to his own past and turning up with one of the better cross-sectional views of old Middle Western WASP America and its religious universe; it is at times cozy and at others terror-filled.

Finally, I shall cherish Paul Valéry, *Poems*, the first volume (but the third last to appear out of fifteen) in the Bollingen series (Princeton, $10). For those of us who have found much to admire in Valéry, this is a lifetime book.

ALICE MAYHEW

ALICE MAYHEW *is an editor at Simon & Schuster.*

Paris France: Personal Recollections. By Gertrude Stein (Peter Owen $3.45). The twentieth century, Miss Stein says, began with 1901.

And Paris was the place that "suited those of us that were to create the twentieth century art and literature, naturally enough." Paris and France, 1900-1939.

Food for francophiles, like me, this is a love-poem to *France civilatrice*, not "constantly making music," not, like England, believing in progress, not like Russia and America arguing whether the world is round, knowing it was round, but not going round and round about it.

When it came to an end, when the century was forty years old, that's when the book ends, just on the edge of the war, when France's middle age and England's adolescence end. It ends before the full tragedy and their separate destinies, but it is dedicated to them both—to France and to England.

This is for Stein addicts, but then the book-buying public is potentially full of Stein addicts. If they only knew it.

Journey for Myself. By Colette (Bobbs-Merrill, $6.95). These particular souvenirs—for the first time in English—on farewells, fads, fashions, furs and feathers, flowers, Sundays, spells, summers, seasons, school, silks, springtime, snow, holiday, hats, hearts, assassins, age, amateurs, novelties, newspapers, paperweights, pedagogy, peril, pockets, elegance, excursions, economy; EVERYDAY ADVENTURES: novelties and logic, tits (little sparrow-like birds) and breasts: "How do you like them? Like a pear, a lemon, *à la Montgolfière*, half an apple, or a cantaloupe? Go on, choose, don't be embarrassed. . . . If you don't mind, Madame, let's bring things up to date. They exist and persist, however criticized and persecuted they may be. There is a dour vitality in those who hope. 'Next year in Jerusalem,' murmured others of the oppressed over the centuries. Those I have in mind whisper perhaps: 'Next year, in the blouse. . . .'

"Everything is possible, the worst seems probable."

One is always reminded, with reason, about Colette—so French, mundane, female, such an unusual combination of Parisian experience and Burgundian soul, affairs and

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loyalties, sardonic, sentimental, shrewd, trusting. But I, at least, forget between Colettes, how witty and how much fun she is to pass the time with. The French, G. Stein says, like older women. I should think so!

The Morning After. By Wilfrid Sheed (Farrar, Straus, $7.95). "Is this man the best critic writing in America today?"

Yes.

The Israelis: Founders and Sons. By Amos Elon (Holt, Rinehart, $10). This is far and away the best book on contemporary Israel I have read, critical, compassionate, well written. The first half, most particularly, about the men and women who came from Russia and Poland to found the homeland and who still, in essence, run Israel's politics explains a lot about the tensions within and without, and the second half discusses the frustrations and hopes of the generation about to take power.

The Female Eunuch. By Germaine Greer (McGraw-Hill, $6.95). The ads are correct. This is the best, certainly the wittiest, book about you-know-what. Also, it reminds me that everybody should read Mary Ellman's brilliant book on, not on you-know-what, on literature, *Thinking About Women* (Harcourt, Brace) published a few years ago, before the fad on you-know-what, and a brilliant book on no-matter-what.

Of Men and Crabs. By Josué de Castro (Vanguard, $5.95). A re-issued novel by the Brazilian scholar who is the author of the classic, *Geography of Hunger.* Castro has spent his life working for the two billion who go hungry. In this moving novel, a small boy (the author) recalls how it happened—that in the miry marshes of the Capibaribe, the constant presence of hunger, in the cycle of crabs eating corpses, and men soon to be corpses eating the crabs who lived on their brothers' corpses, the boy grew up to struggle against the terrible cycle—out of the emptiness "left by hunger in my soul as a child."

Louis W. Koenig's *Bryan* (G. P. Putnam's, $14.95) captures the quality of a man and an era in American life, recalling a time when politics was a passion and political hope still ran like a torrent. Koenig helps to demolish the image of Bryan created by the vindictiveness of the petty ideologists who have so long passed for historians in American intelectual life. The book is not without faults: Koenig is too concerned, for example, to make Bryan acceptable to a modern audience and does his hero a disservice thereby. But it is a labor of love and a thing of dignity, and restores a sense of proportion in our understanding of a critical period in the American past.

Theodore J. Lowi, in *The Politics of Disorder* (Basic Books, $6.95), argues that what is best in the American political tradition can be recovered, and possibly purged of the dross of liberal mythology and theory. In many ways, *The Politics of Disorder* is a response to the critics of Lowi's earlier *The End of Liberalism*, in which Lowi clarifies his theory of "juridical democracy." For Lowi, political disorder is a kind of therapy, forcing our formal institutions of government to resume control, to reclaim sovereignty from the shadow government of public and private bureaucracy. There are still fuzzy edges to the theory, and Lowi's essays on the university show a kind of petulance that seems to have marred his thinking. But an encounter with Lowi's mind is worth such annoyances. He is a true marvel in this age, a man of republican virtue, who combines civic morality with a questing, critical intelligence. And his recognition that the logic of American life and institutions requires a politics of "law and disorder" may be the first step on a way out of the present morass.

Kenneth S. Lynn's *William Dean Howells* (Harcourt, Brace, $13.95) is traditionally academic in form, the model of respectable literary biography. But Lynn has a feeling for Howells and his time, an awareness of the struggle in Howells between the realist, who felt

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WILSON CAREY McWILLIAMS

WILSON CAREY MCWILLIAMS *teaches political science at Rutgers University*

The holiday season is the end of one year and the beginning of another; secular with a vengeance in modern America, it at least preserves a memory of a time when days and men could still be holy. It is a time for reflecting, as Scrooge was forced to do, on what is past, present and to come. And hopefully, we will find, like Scrooge, that we are not too late.

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the function of art was to depict, and the traditionalist, who argued that art existed to teach. We have lived to see realism win out, and Howells may seem somewhat quaint and his art, tension-ridden as it was, may appear no more than mediocre. But realism has proved, in its victory, to be supremely unrealistic, failing to understand—as the tradition from Plato on never did—both the nature of man and the dignity of art.

It is one of the things that makes Jonathan Eisen's *Twenty Minutes Fandangoes and Forever Changes* (Random House, $7.95) intriguing that Eisen remembers what the realists forgot. Eisen has made the anthology something of an art, and *Twenty Minute Fandangoes* is a work rather than a collection. It endeavors to teach, but by the ancient method of dialectic rather than more modern conceits, and consequently Eisen's teaching—even if I understand it rightly—does not lend itself to any simple summary. But *Twenty Minute Fandangoes* is a troubling, moving reflection on our times. And as the title suggests, it is a reflection on time, the moment of the dance and the change that is forever. Zarathustra, after all, was also a dancer: that thought is no bad one with which to approach the holidays.

WILLIAM PFAFF

WILLIAM PFAFF *is the author of Condemned to Freedom:* The Breakdown of Liberal Society *(Random House).*

What could have been the most interesting book I read this year proved the most annoying. Harry Kessler's diaries, published in a shortened version under the title *In the Twenties* (Holt, Rinehart, $10), provide a remarkable personal account of European politics and art between the Great War and the late 1930s. The mistitling, however, is only the start of a botched publishing job. The notes identify the people who least need it and ignore the larger number who do, including many who play important parts in Kessler's life. Hardly anything is told us of Kessler's private situation, his odd but important diplomatic career and why he abandoned it, the circumstances of his life and of his political role in Germany. A great disappointment.

Biography and autobiography: Arthur Mizener's *The Saddest Story* (World, $12.95). Not a terribly good book although a conscientious one about Ford Madox Ford, whose *The Good Soldier* and four Tietjens novels seem to me as fine as any of the English novels of this century. I have never seen it remarked that the Tietjens books (*No More Parades, A Man Could Stand Up, Some Do Not, Last Post*) are identical in theme to Evelyn Waugh's second world war trilogy, and rather more impressive. In both cases the destruction of a certain period and standard of English middle-class culture is described in the wartime ordeal and defeat of that legendary figure, An English Gentleman. In Waugh it is brilliant but highly sentimental comedy; in Ford it is tragedy. Storm Jameson's mercilessly unsentimental *Journey from the North* (Harper & Row, $15) is a very good book, as is the second of C. L. Sulzberger's memoirs, *The Last of the Giants* (Macmillan, $12.50). Sulzberger is so pompous and complacent in his newspaper columns that I expected little. Instead, in this book (as in the first volume, *A Long Row of Candles*), he proves to be a splendid gossip, each night writing down all of the inside stories, jokes and scandals he did not supply to the *Times*, and making a valuable chronicle of the 1940's, '50s and '60s. His account of a series of private conversations with General de Gaulle, with whom he had an unexpectedly close while entirely formal friendship, is revealing and even moving.

Wolves in the City, The Death of French Algeria, by Paul Henissart (Simon and Schuster, $8.95), is the best work of contemporary history I have read in a long time, a detailed and detached account of the Algerian crisis of 1958-1962: the army rebellion, the rise of the OAS, the Gaullist counter-attack, the collapse of the OAS and exodus of the *pieds noirs*. I don't know

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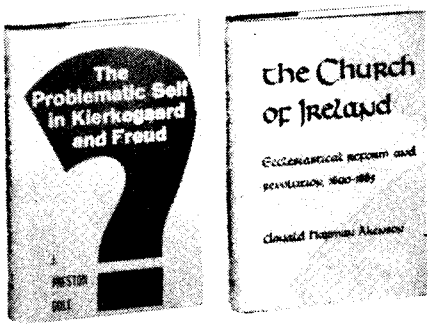

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who Henissart, an American, is, nor is the biographical note in the book very informative, but he apparently was in Algeria for the whole time and knows a great deal indeed (including about the controversial *barbouzes,* anti-OAS agents and terrorists, originally an enterprise of left-wing Gaullists).

A book of essays: Midge Decter's *The Liberated Woman and Other Americans* (Coward, McCann, $6.95), too individual and intelligent to be fashionable. A novel: there was a new Anthony Powell, of course, *Books Do Furnish a Room* (Little, Brown $5.95), and while I am always faintly annoyed by all the references to, and passing appearances by, characters from other books in this series—does Mr. Powell really expect that we will keep track of all these people? who cares?—I nonetheless always succumb to his prose and his intelligence. That other Englishman of a certain age, Graham Greene, seemed to me distinctly disappointing—and very guarded indeed—in his memoirs, *A Sort of Life* (Simon and Schuster, $6.95), although there are those distinctive Greene moments, as when his grandfather's toe comes off.

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

FATHER RAYMOND A. SCHROTH, S.J., *is a member of the Communications Department at Fordham University.*

Christmas is a time for setting things right. Not a time for merely surface reconciliations that fade with the season. Christmas is a time to be tough. To search for glimmers of justice and truth by confronting the total life of the man whose coming we recall. A time to look at good and evil.

Richard Taylor's recent overlengthy refutation of the rationalistic tradition in ethics, *Good and Evil* (Macmillan, $1.95), should be read for the exercise. After a long analysis of the Socratic ethic, hedonism, Kantian morality and casuistry, Taylor proposes a voluntaristic ethic that urges us to aspire to be warm-hearted and loving human beings. Men act, says Taylor, not out of fidelity to duty or because of principles (because all principles have exceptions) but on the basis of their desires, common sense, and the fundamental human feelings of malice or compassion. Therefore we need not analyze our significant actions to determine their moral value; we know spontaneously whether they are tender or cruel. Justice and the common good, therefore, are not achieved by adherence to God or law, but by a common caring which springs from the heart of man. With this in mind, we might look at books that measure justice in our nation.

Read *The Report of the President's Commission on Campus Unrest* (Avon, $1.95) to remember that the killers of the Kent State four have never met justice; and no one seems to care but the students' parents. Then think of other murderers who have gone free—the Green Berets who put a bullet in a helpless double agent and sank his body in the sea. This was the event that convinced Daniel Ellsberg he could no longer be part of a system of lies.

Next scan those 677 pages of *The Pentagon Papers* (Bantam, $2.25) for a spark of moral feeling—for compassion, for a sense of human suffering, for self-doubt—and find the "problem solvers," the men who were used to winning, so-called good men, dealing with thousands of lives as if they were rooks or pawns on a board or yellow pins on a map. For one paragraph of a memo, Secretary Robert S. McNamara, the super-rationalist-pragmatist, lets slip a feeling, a qualm that the picture of the United States killing or seriously injuring 1,000 non-combatants a week was "not a pretty one." But that qualm never became an overriding moral concern and few of our leaders have been so tender-minded since.

Daniel Ellsberg, thank God, is proof —like the Monroe County coroner who told the truth about the Attica slaughter—that there still are good (that is *just*) men. The claims of conscience have always outweighed the duties of citizenship. That's why we call martyrs saints. But we have been

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less than willing to live up to the modern implications of that idea. Ellsberg is trying and he will suffer for it—maybe more than the Green Berets and citizen Calley will suffer for their deeds. I wish Fordham, or some other Catholic university, would bravely seize the honor of giving Ellsberg an honorary degree.

Peter Schrag has observed in *The Saturday Review* (Nov. 13) that *The Pentagon Papers* reinforce the radical argument that it doesn't matter who is President, that each brutality and each deception are treated as an aberration while the system remains intact. In the same frame of mind a faculty colleague of mine has argued that it might be good for Nixon to be re-elected in order to demonstrate all the more forcibly how rotten a nation America can be. As if Kent State, the Calley cult, and Attica had not made that clear enough already! What is the weapon against such cynicism?

For novelist Philip Roth it is satire, moral rage transformed into comic art. *Our Gang* (Random House, $5.95) is his murderously hilarious response to President Richard M. Nixon's remark that as a religious believer in the sanctity of human life he was against abortion and a defender of the rights of the unborn—that is, Roth adds, that vast decent majority of unborn who do not demonstrate, kick, or wave dirty signs.

In Roth's series of press conferences, sketches and speeches, his President, Trick E. Dixon, meets a Crisis, an uprising of the Boy Scouts, with firmness. He explains to the nation on TV that the three scouts whom his troops killed were actually deadly conspirators, as is evident from their Boy Scout knives. When the President is assassinated thousands march on Washington claiming credit for the deed while the media spouts pious blah blah blah about a nation in sorrow. Finally, in Hell, Dixon makes his comeback where he runs against Satan and accuses him of being soft on God. It would be hard to exaggerate the genius of *Our Gang*. It is almost too true to be good. Roth has dramatized every deceit, every rationalization, every moment of paranoid self-pity that characterizes the Administration—and Eric Sevareid as well. But Roth is above all a moralist, enraged—like Ellsberg—that in a country we would like to love, moral casuistry and political language have lost track of truth. And not even death itself can shock us back to common sense and human feeling.

PETER STEINFELS

PETER STEINFELS *is associate editor of* Commonweal.

The book event of the year for me was the publication in paperback of Gabriel García Márquez' *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (Avon, $1.50). There is now no reason why, by the end of the holidays, every literate American should not have a copy of this marvelous novel the way every Chinese has a little red book.

Despite my reservations about the authors' proposals, *Regulating the Poor* by Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward (Pantheon, $10) is the best overall explanation of our welfare crisis. It links general economic and political shifts with the reality of the local administrator-recipient relationship, and even its questionable generalizations can be correctives to our illusions. Very different but equally valuable is Gilbert Y. Steiner's *The State of Welfare*, (Brookings, $8; paper, $3.50) which approaches the same problem from the perspective of government policy-making. Their subject notwithstanding, both books are genuinely exciting to read.

Karl Dietrich Bracher's *The German Dictatorship* (Praeger, $13.95) and the diaries of Harry Kessler, *In the Twenties* (Holt, Rinehart, $10) record the march of Germany toward horror and tragedy. Bracher's book is not for casual readers, the most thorough investigation and careful interpretation to date of the rise of Nazism, the totalitarian regime it established, and the opposition it met and didn't meet. Kessler's diary of

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Weimar and Eurpean cultural and political life is that irresistible combination of gossip and history.

The Discovery of the Asylum by David J. Rothman (Little, Brown, $12.50) is a fascinating look at the development of institutionalization (prisons, poorhouses, asylums, orphanages) as a solution for social problems in early 19th-century America, and at the utopian impulse behind what turned out to be definitely non-utopian institutions. Rothman, I think, is weak on the economic substructure of these changes; but his book provides a historical perspective on numerous current issues; it is, for instance, an interesting complement to *Regulating the Poor.*

Wilfrid Sheed needs no introduction in these precincts. The secret long admitted by everyone but Sheed himself, that he is as brilliant a critic and essayist as novelist, is now officially out, in the form of *The Morning After* (Farrar, Straus, $7.95). Sheed reviews Mailer, Updike, Agee, the Chesterbelloc, Podhoretz, Eugene McCarthy, California, baseball, book reviewing itself, etc. Once hit, they stay down.

Nor is introduction needed for William Pfaff, foreign affairs writer and former editor for *Commonweal.* Pfaff is a man with a sense of the tragic whose style of thought is philosophical, historical and "soft": he writes about what doesn't appear on the computer printouts. It is a style of thought irrelevant to the hard-nosed and irritating to those mucking about in day-by-day politics. By now, however, we ought to know its value. In *Condemned to Freedom* (Random House, $6.95) he searches for the roots of the crisis of liberalism, both in domestic and international politics, and suggests the direction of a "radicalism of reason."

Three other collections by writers who published early pieces in *Commonweal:* Richard Gilman's *Common and Uncommon Masks* (Random House, $8.95) writings on theater; Ronald Steel's *Imperialists and Other Heroes* (Random House, $8.95), which contains an insightful introductory note on being a member of the "generation" which preceded the New Left; and Jack Newfield's *Bread and Roses Too* (Dutton, $8.95 cloth, $3.95 paper).

And three other contributors have edited and introduced volumes deserving far more attention than they've received: David Littlejohn did *The André Gide Reader* (Knopf, $20); Dick Howard a much needed *Selected Political Writings* by Rosa Luxemburg (Monthly Review Press, $11.50); and Sidney Callahan *The Working Mother* (Macmillan, $5.95).

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ELLIOTT WRIGHT

ELLIOTT WRIGHT *is on the staff of Religious News Service. His latest book is* The Big Little School *(Harper's).*

Books describing the problems of the world seemed to dominate my 1971 reading. I missed the lighter titles, if there were any. Right now I'm contemplating a return to *Winnie-the-Pooh.*

The End of the Modern Age, by Allen Wheelis (Basic, $4.95), is at once the most disturbing and most hopeful non-fiction I read this year. Its argument that scientific and political arrogance has stripped modern man of ability to use knowledge gives me shivers. But by skillfully unwinding the assumption that science is God, the California psychiatrist points to a future in which computers and rockets are subservient to humanness. Wheelis writes prose with poetic intensity.

If a book can elicit action to lessen the gigantic perils to the environment it will be *The Closing Circle* by Barry Commoner (Knopf, $6.95). I hope it frightens the AEC as much as it does me. Also appreciated are the doubts about the beatitude of the everyday ecology movement raised in Richard Neuhaus' *In Defense of People* (Macmillan, $6.95). While his style is so rapid-fire that it jolts, Neuhaus makes a genuine political contribution by showing how strides for "quality environment" can work against the poor and powerless.

Boss, by Mike Rolko (Dutton, $5.95) is good research journalism; not as epic-making as Jimmy Breslin says, yet I feel better knowing at least one Chicagoan keeps a skeptical eye on Mayor Daley. Contemplation of the Democrat's shenanigans in the Windy City provided a few mornings respite from my Nixon woebegones.

In a different vein, Malcolm Muggeridge's *Something Beautiful for God* (Harper & Row $5.95), a sort of bio-

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graphy of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, is itself something beautiful, capturing the dynamic blend of love for God and neighbor in a nun's labor among the unloved and unwanted. Mother Teresa stands close to the real meaning of sainthood.

The late Clarence Jordan, much maligned founder of the interracial Koinonia Farms in Georgia, is in that same league. Dallas Lee offers a moving account of the Baptist clergyman's tribulations and triumphs in *The Cotton Patch Evidence* (Harper & Row, $5.95). A bona fide Bible scholar before turning to tilling red clay and tempering white hate near Americus, Jordan prepared Southern vernacular —"cotton patch"—versions of New Testament parts; hence, Lee's title.

Friends unwrapping Christmas books will find either of two posthumous collections: Carson McCullers' *The Mortgaged Heart* (Houghton Mifflin, $7.95), edited by Margarita G. Smith, or Flannery O'Connor's *The Complete Stories* (Farrar, Straus, $10). Neither —and the O'Connor has more substance—adds much to brief, illustrious careers. Still, I am more pleased to read and reread these women than, say Graham Greene or Gore Vidal. Perhaps that is because I have trouble recognizing as fiction anything except Southern Gothic.

I am also a booster of the Byzantine. *Justinian and Theodora*, by Robert Browning (Praeger, $15), contains a free-flowing history of Constantinople's heyday and excellently reproduced color prints of mosaics and architecture. The pages shimmer. It's a book to give oneself.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 219)

for witches, male or female. (Likewise, the word *witch* (A.S. *wicce, wica*) had nothing to do with "wisdom.") Most witches today believe neither in the devil nor in the common notion of magic, finding their "power" more in the area of ESP and mental concentration, telepathy, etc. Witchcraft today is a new religion for the young, a neo-paganism, which only mythologically justifies the title "The Old Religion."

Mr. McFerran's article nevertheless carefully and accurately delineated many complex factors leading many of today's young counter-culturalists to accept magic and occultism. From several years' preoccupation with the phenomenon—both in research and direct encounter—I would add that besides a generalized and ideological repugnance toward "technocracy" (to use Roszak's term), with its consequences of eco-catastrophy, dehumanization and nuclear annihilation, the searchers who have espoused alternative forms of authority, allegiance and understanding have done so in conscious rejection of the *political-cultural* morass of contemporary society and the destructive tensions disrupting the *organized churches*. The appearance of the Jesus-people and pentecostal Catholicism are not unrelated. In non-linear perspective, the pervasive attitude of the young today, whether witches or witnesses, was aptly described by Marcia Cavell as an uneasy conviction that something is radically wrong with the West. . . . So it indeed appears. And magic in its manifold guises, new or old, as well as varieties of mysticism and neo-pagan nature-cult, may serve us well at least in so far as it helps keep before us alternatives to Armageddon.

(REV.) RICHARD WOODS, O.P.
Philosophy Dept., Loyola University

Ending the Draft

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: Re: Your October 22 issue which included "The Draft Goes On" editorial.

It is distressing how frequently the Executive (President Johnson was no less reluctant about doing this than is President Nixon) plays on Congress' legitimate concern about national defense to achieve not-so-legitimate ends.

One of these days we're going to have the gumption to stand up and say "NO!"

ALAN CRANSTON
United States Senate

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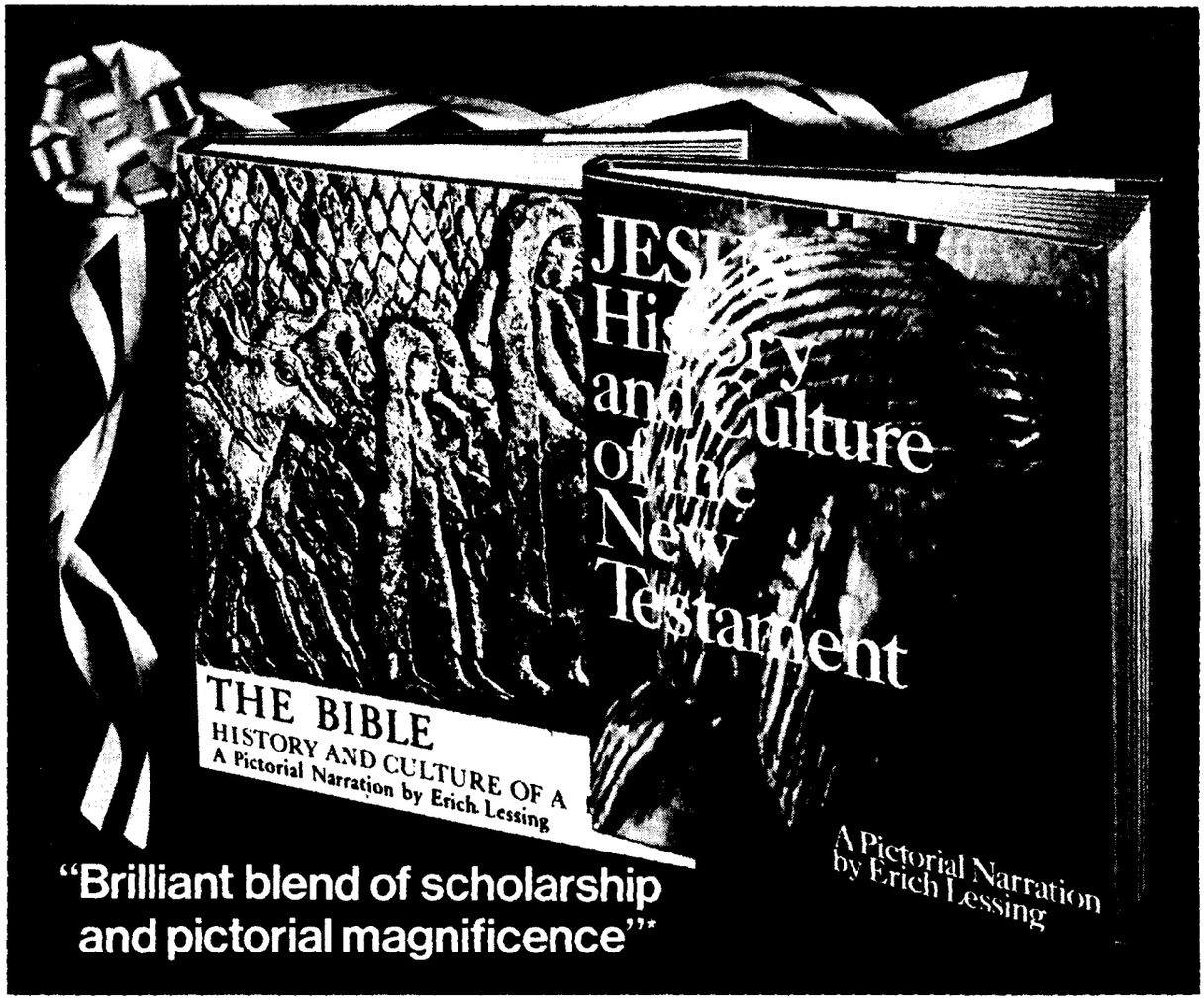
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